**Blind persons in the country**

362. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the estimates published in the latest issue of the National Medical Journal of India reflect that 18.7 million blind persons in the country would double in about next 20 years;

(b) if so, the other broad features of the said issue of the journal; and

(c) how Government propose to eliminate avoidable blindness amongst Indians?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) The estimates published in the National Medical Journal of India are based on a study conducted in Andhra Pradesh only and therefore cannot be extrapolated to the entire country.

(c) A comprehensive Plan of Action is being prepared by a Working Group constituted by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare under Vision 2020. The Right to Sight Global Initiative aimed at eliminating avoidable blindness in the country. The plan includes controlling blindness due to cataract, glaucoma, diabetes and refractive errors. Special focus will be on prevention and control of blindness in children.

**Recognition of courses of Pariyaram and Kochi Co-operative Medical Colleges, Kerala**

363. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recognized the courses conducted by the Pariyaram and Kochi Cooperative Medical Colleges in Kerala;

(b) whether applications for recognition of courses have been pending with Government;

(c) whether the Medical Council has taken any step for the recognition of courses; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for non recognition thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (d) The Medical Council of India have not recommended for grant of recognition to the MBBS course of the Academy of Medical Sciences, Pariyaram, Kannur and renewal of permission for admission of the second batch of students during 2001-2002 at Co-operative Medical College, Kochi due to deficiencies of staff, infrastructural facilities etc. The Medical Council of India is presently examining the clarification received from the Government of Kerala with regard to the academy of Medical Sciences, Pariyaram. The proposal for granting renewal of permission to the Cooperative Medical College, Kochi for admission of the second batch of students is being exmained by the Government.

**Steps to check AIDS in Delhi**

†364. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the news-item captioned "Rajdhani main 22 Hazar log AIDS peedit", which appeared in 'Dainik Jagran', dated the 4th January, 2002;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) Government's reaction thereto; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to check the dreadful disease like AIDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government is aware of the news-item that appeared in Dainik Jagran on 4.1.02. However, there are only 656, cumulative number of reported cases of AIDS in Delhi.

(c) and (d) Government has launched a comprehensive AIDS prevention and control programme, which is a 100% centrally sponsored scheme being implemented in all States/UTs through States/UTss AIDS Control Societies. The main components consist of :—

- Reducing the spread of HIV in groups at high risk by identification of target populations and providing peer conselling, condom promotion and treatment of sexually transmitted infections.
- Preventive intervention for the general population by Information,

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.